

JOURNEY STUDENT MINISTRY

What We Believe

God: God is the eternal creator of all things (*Genesis 1:1*). He is all-powerful (*Job 37:1-5*), all-knowing (*Romans 11:33-34*), and sovereign over everything He has created (*Psalms 115:3, Daniel 4:34-35*). He has always existed and will never cease to exist (*Psalms 102:25-27*). There is nothing created by Him that compares to His infinite glory (*Psalms 19*). He is holy and righteous by nature and cannot act outside of His character (*1 John 1:5, Psalms 18:30, Psalms 30:4, Psalms 71:15*).

Jesus Christ: Jesus is the Son of God, sent by the Father as a man, yet still fully God. Jesus was born of a virgin (*Luke 1:26-35*), lived a perfect life (*1 John 3:5, 1 Peter 2:22*) died a gruesome death (*Mark 15*), was raised from the dead on the third day (*1 Corinthians 15:3-4*), and is now seated at the right hand of the Father (*Hebrews 1:3*) making intercession for us (*Hebrews 7:24-25*). It is through the death and resurrection of Jesus that believers find life in Him (*Romans 6:3-4*). We believe that Jesus will one day come again just as He left at His ascension (*Acts 1:9-11*).

Holy Spirit: The Holy Spirit is the Counselor/Advocate/Helper (*John 14:26*) sent by God to live within believers once they believe in Christ as Savior (*1 Corinthians 3:16*). The Holy Spirit provides wisdom, knowledge, and understanding to believers (*1 Corinthians 2:12-14*) and is a key player in the process of life-change in the life of a believer (*Romans 8:13, 1 Corinthians 6:11, 2 Corinthians 3:18*). He guides believers into all truth (*John 16:13*) and gives power to believers to be witnesses of Christ (*Acts 1:8*).

Bible: The Bible is the inerrant Word of God. The Lord has exalted His Word above His name (*Psalms 138:2*), and because God cannot lie, we believe every word He has said to be true (*Titus 1:2, Hebrews 6:17-18*). The entire Bible is useful for teaching, reproof, correction, and training in righteousness (*2 Timothy 3:16-17*). We elevate the teachings of the Bible above our assumptions, ideas, and experiences, and we desire to faithfully teach and live by it.

Salvation and the Christian Life: All of humanity is born into sin. Humanity's sin originated in the Garden of Eden when Adam and Eve disobeyed God (*Genesis 3*). Since then, all people have been eternally separated from God because of original and personal sin. We were dead in these sins, without the hope of being reconciled to God. But God, in His love and mercy, sent Jesus as the perfect sacrifice for our sins. Because of Jesus' death and resurrection, we can be fully reconciled to God, but not through anything we have done. We are saved by grace through faith in Christ, and His grace is a gift. Nothing we have done could have earned us His saving grace (*Ephesians 2:1-10*). Now, as believers in Jesus, we are to "walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called" (*Ephesians 4:1*). We are to conform to the image of Jesus throughout the course of our lives (*Romans 8:29*). This process begins at salvation and does not end until we are with Him (*Romans 6:22*). We are not saved by works, but God expects and even commands believers to live in light of the gift of grace that we have received.

Hot Topics

Sexuality and Relationships

- Marriage: We believe marriage was instituted by God at the beginning of human history (*Genesis 2:18-25*). We hold to the biblical definition of marriage as shown in *Genesis 2:24* and *Matthew 19:5*, which both state, “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.” Marriage is good and desirable in its proper context, and it is a picture of Christ and His bride, the Church (*Ephesians 5:22-30*).
- Sex: We believe that God created sex as consummation of the marriage relationship that promotes physical intimacy and togetherness. A man and wife become one through sex, and in a marital context sex is good and desirable (*Song of Solomon, 1 Corinthians 7:1-5*). Outside of the context of a marriage relationship is where sexual expression become sexual immorality. Fornication (sex before or outside of marriage), adultery, homosexuality, and lust all fall into this category of sexual immorality as recounted in the New Testament (*1 Corinthians 6:9-11, Matthew 5:27-28*). In today’s cultural context, “hooking up/messing around,” sexting, pornography, affairs, and homosexual relationships fall into this category of sexual immorality. For believers, we should abstain from these things (*Ephesians 5:1-3*). According to Paul, sexual sins are unlike others because sexual sins are committed against your own body, which is considered the temple of God for believers (*1 Corinthians 6:17-20*). In caring for someone who has dealt with sexual issues, approach them with love and grace, and help them to focus on the redemption that Christ provides for them. Their worth lies in being created by and belonging to God. While they cannot “go back,” they do have the opportunity to begin again with Christ.
- Divorce: In today’s world, divorce is very prevalent. We believe that divorce, in nearly every circumstance, is painful for all those who are involved. The Bible implies that God is adamantly against divorce (*Malachi 2:13-16*) and this is reinforced through Jesus’ teaching on divorce (*Matthew 5:31-32, 19:6-9*). Sexual unfaithfulness on the part of a spouse, according to Jesus, is acceptable grounds for the allowance of divorce. There are other extenuating circumstances (abuse, domestic violence, etc.) that are not stated in scripture but are generally accepted as a grounds for a separation at some level. In caring for those going through or affected by a divorce, one should respond with love and grace while acknowledging the biblical truth behind the pain.
- Homosexuality: The practice of homosexuality is one of the most hotly debated topics in the world today. We believe that God’s Word speaks against homosexual relationships and practices (*1 Corinthians 6:9-11*). While we do not hold to the Old Testament civic laws in dealing with this and several other issues, we do believe that unrepentant individuals who engage in homosexuality, along with all other unrepentant sinners, will face the “due penalty for their error” (*Romans 1:26-32*). Believers are not to engage in this practice. In caring for someone who struggles with homosexuality, approach them with grace and love, and refrain from casting judgment while still communicating the truth of God’s Word to them.

- Pornography: Because of major technological increases, porn has become much more accessible to anyone with internet access. While the Bible does not speak specifically about pornography, lust and selfishness are both clearly addressed. Sex was created by God as an expression of love, togetherness, and intimacy between a husband and wife, but porn has taken sex and perverted it, turning it into a one-sided, selfish, self-destructive avenue for empty pleasure. Our bodies are temples of God, meant to be used to glorify Jesus (*1 Corinthians 6:18-20, Romans 12:1-2*). Indulging in porn is first and foremost an act of lust (*Matthew 5:27-28*) rooted in selfish desire (*James 1:13-15*). In dealing with someone struggling with porn, you must recognize that some of the biggest deterrents for a student asking for help are shame, guilt, and feeling as if they are the only ones who struggle with this. Approach them with care, give them the truth, and place them in a setting where they can be accountable to someone. (Check out xxxchurch.com for more resources on dealing with pornography.)

Language

- Cursing/Crude Joking: Throughout the Bible, there is major emphasis put on the words we say, mainly because what we say is an overflow of what is in our hearts (*Matthew 15:18-20*). James says that if a man can tame what he says, he can tame his whole body (*James 3:2-12*). Paul says, "Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving" (*Ephesians 5:4*). As believers, this kind of talk isn't supposed to come out of our mouths (*Colossians 3:8*). As we strive to become more like Jesus (*Colossians 3:10*), our minds are to be renewed (*Romans 12:2*) and our hearts are to be made clean (*Psalms 51:10*). As our minds and hearts are changed, cursing and crude joking must fall away. A guard must be set over our mouths and our hearts as we continue in our relationship with Christ (*Psalms 141:3-4*).
- Bullying: Verbal bullying has increasingly become an issue today. As stated above, what we say is an overflow of what is in our hearts (*Matthew 15:18-20*). Because we are believers in Jesus, what we say to other people should reflect the love we have for God and for them (*Matthew 22:36-40*). We must realize that the words we say have power to build up or to tear down (*Proverbs 18:21, James 3:8-9*). As we follow Jesus, bullying and verbal abuse shouldn't be associated with us at all. We should exhort one another to love and good works (*Hebrews 10:24*), urge each other to stay away from sin (*Hebrews 3:13*), build each other up in grace and be kind to one another (*Ephesians 4:29-32, 1 Thessalonians 5:11*), and count others as more significant than ourselves (*Philippians 2:3-4*).

Alcohol and Drugs

- Alcohol: We believe that in and of itself, alcohol is not an evil thing. However, alcohol is easily misused and abused, leading to drunkenness, which we firmly stand against. Paul tells believers not to get drunk with wine but to be filled with the Spirit (*Ephesians 5:18*). Drunkenness leads to unwise and foolish decisions along with a host of sins (*Proverbs 20:1, 23:29-35*). Also, for students (and anyone else under 21) it is illegal to drink. In his letters, Paul tells believers to submit to government authority and leadership (*Romans*

13:1, Titus 3:1), leading us to follow this mandate on alcohol consumption. Overall, our lives should be lived to glorify Christ, and we must ask ourselves whether or not our alcohol consumption will hinder us from doing so.

- Drugs: We believe that drug usage should not be found in the life of a believer. As with alcohol consumption, there are laws that make drug use illegal, and as believers we should follow these mandates (*Romans 13:1, Titus 3:1*). Aside from that, the Bible does not speak specifically about drugs, though there are several reasons we should not engage in drug use. The first is that Christ has set us free from our former way of life (*Ephesians 2:2-5*), and we are not intended to walk according to the ways of our flesh (*Romans 8:5-8*). Second, Paul says not to be mastered by anything, and drug use will eventually master you (*1 Corinthians 6:11-12*). Third, we are to honor God with our bodies because our bodies are His temple (*1 Corinthians 3:16-17, 6:19-20*). Lastly, we are to live wisely, have been transformed by the renewing of our minds, living out our faith with integrity (*Romans 12:2, Ephesians 5:15-17, Psalm 25:21*). In the end, we must ask whether or not our drug use will help others to see Jesus in us and whether it truly glorifies God.